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ABSTRACT

Research regarding the antecedents and consequences of faculty cultures was surveyed, based primarily on computer searches of ERIC (1966-79), "Sociological Abstracts" (1963-79), and "Psychological Abstracts" (1967-79). Faculty cultures is used to refer to work-related perceptions, norms, and values that are shared by some or all of the teachers within a given school. Collegial interaction directed toward the solution of common and recurrent problems is seen as a fundamental dynamic in the creation and maintenance of informal cultural guidelines for instructional practice. Responses to six essential problems in teaching are described. Those problems are: inadequate preparation, ambiguous goals, precarious autonomy, instructional isolation, and batch-processing of students. It is concluded that despite professional and organizational barriers to faculty solidarity, informal work groups do develop and that these primary groups offer their members help, support, guidance, and consensual validation regarding appropriate instructional practices. A sociological model of the teaching-learning process is presented, within which collegial relationships and faculty cultures are central. Research linking faculty cultures to student achievement is highlighted and the need for further research is noted. (Author/SW)

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Faculty Cultures and Instructional Practices*

by

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ABSTRACT

A computer search of ERIC (1966-79), Sociological Abstracts (1963-79), and Psychological Abstracts (1967-79) data bases revealed a scattered and uneven literature which contributes to an understanding of the nature and impact of faculty cultures. By faculty cultures we refer to work-related perceptions, norms, and values which are shared by some or all of the teachers within a given school. Collegial interaction directed toward the solution of common and recurrent problems is seen as a fundamental dynamic in the creation and maintenence of informal cultural guidelines for instructional practice. Individual and collective responses to six essential problems in schoolteaching are described. Those problems are: inadequate preparation, ambiguous goals, precarious autonomy, instructional isolation and batch-processing of students. It is concluded that despite professional and organizational barriers to faculty solidarity, informal work groups do develop and that these primary groups offer their members help, support, guidance, and consensual validation regarding appropriate instructional practices. A sociological model of the teaching-learning process within which collegial relationships and faculty cultures are central is presented. Finally, research linking faculty cultures to student achievement is highlighted and further research called for.

Faculty Cultures and Instructional Practices

This paper presents a synthesis of the scattered and uneven literature which contributes to an understanding of the nature and impact of faculty cultures. As we use the term, faculty cultures refers to work-related perceptions, norms and values which are shared by some or all of the teachers within a given school. These cultural guidelines for practice are created and/or maintained by informal groups of teachers. To date there have been no systematic investigations of collegial influences upon classroom behaviors. But as will be demonstrated below there is enough suggestive evidence to justify further research into the dynamics of faculty cultures.

Theoretical Background

Informal groups and occupational cultures have been studied from both formal organizational and symbolic interactionist perspectives. Both have contributed to this synthetic effort.

The existence and impact of primary groups among workers within bureaucracies has long been recognized. Such groups have been found within industrial (Barnard 1938; Roethlisberger and Dickson 1947; Roy 1952; Gouldner 1954), military (Page 1946-47; Shils and Janowitz 1948; Stouffer 1949; Little 1964; Moskos 1970) and professional settings (Blau 1957; Becker, Geer and Hughes 1968; Freidson 1975; Baldridge 1971). Wherever they exist informal work groups develop their own unofficial, yet highly

influential, definitions of their work situation and productivity norms. In situations where there is uncertainty or risk, lateral relations among workers may be helpful through sharing information, problem-solving and provision of social support (March and Simon 1958; Blau and Scott 1962; Perrow 1972; Galbraith 1973). The work group defines means of coping with recurrent problems which are socially acceptable to its members and may provide consensual validation for individual and collective deviance from official regulations. Extension of these generalizations about informal work relationships to schools would appear to be a promising and fruitful step. However, to date no one has done empirical research based upon this insight.

The symbolic interactionist analyses of work done by E. C. Hughes and his associates have also contributed to our understanding of collegial relationships. After studying jazz musicians, furriers, medical students, undergraduate students and schoolteachers, Hughes concluded that

> ...if a certain problem turned up in one occupation, it was nearly certain to turn up in all. We were skeptical when someone said, for instance, that in their favorite occupation there was no restriction of production, no exclusion of some people from the intimacy and protection of colleagueship, no favoring of some clients or customers over others, no codes of behavior with supporting informal sanctions, no secrecy, no sense of rank. The thing was to discover in what form the problem

> turned up, how serious it was and how it was handled ... The essence of the comparative frame is that one seeks differences in terms of dimensions common to all the cases (1971: 420).

Becker has provided us with a linkage between the essential problems of work, social interaction and the genesis of occupational cultures.

> A group finds itself sharing a common situation and common problems. Various members of the group experiment with possible solutions to those problems and report their experiences to their fellows. In the course of their collective discussion, the members of the group arrive at a definition of the situation, its problems and possibilities, and develop consensus as to the most appropriate and efficient ways of behaving. This consensus thenceforth constrains the activities of individual members of the group, who will probably act on it, given the opportunity.
>
> The collective character of socialization processes has a profound effect on their consequences. Because the solutions the group reaches have, for the individual being socialized, the character of "what everyone knows to be true," he tends to accept them (1964: 47).

Common situations and problems spur workers to interact and to develop consensus on acceptable adaptation strategies. Over time these cultural guidelines are taken for granted and passed on to neophytes as they appear on the scene.

Useful as the description above is, it is still somewhat oversimplified. The problem-solving process is complicated if communication is incomplete and collegial trust is minimal. Under such circumstances individuals may resolve the problems on their own and not share their solutions with others. Stebbins (1977: 29) has made a useful distinction between consensual sharing and nonconsensual sharing. Consensual sharing arises from direct and ongoing communication as in the circumstances described by Becker. On the other hand it is possible that individuals will come to similar resolutions of common problems with minimal conversation about them. Co-workers may be partially or totally ignorant of the fact that they share common problems, perspectives, norms and values. Thus, nonconsensual sharing and collective ignorance are possible under conditions of constrained interaction. Because the opportunities for conversation, consultation and commiseration among teachers in most schools are quite limited, nonconsensual sharing may develop.

Further, total consensus within a school faculty may be limited to a few very general and abstract principles. Later in this paper cliques and cleavages within teaching staffs will be described. Where staffs are sharply divided by specialization, philosophy, techniques or other factors, interaction may be restricted to small groups of like-minded individuals. Factionalization will reduce the potential for the recognition and discussion of common problems and resolutions. Thus, overall staff solidarity will be low.

The symbolic interactionist perspective is useful in that it highlights the roles which face-to-face relationships among workers play in creating and maintaining work patterns. However, we should not be blinded to the

fact that larger ecological, sociocultural, political-economic, technological, professional and formal organizational factors limit the adaptation options available to teacher work groups. In particular the processes of professional and organizational recruitment, selection, socialization, evaluation, reward and negotiation no doubt shape work patterns in ways which are not yet fully understood.

Faculty cultures are not easily susceptible to empirical exploration. Under normal circumstances many faculty perspectives, norms and values are taken for granted. Faculty cultures provide schoolteachers with a body of conventional wisdom which may not be challenged, explored or discussed without discomfort. The discomfort may arise not only from the process of examining cultural patterns which are not generally recognized, but also from the fact that some of those patterns may be purposely hidden from superiors and outsiders. Some of the shared strategies for coping with recurrent problems may bypass or contradict official policies. Public knowledge of their existence could quite possibly lead to controversy and efforts to eliminate those practices. In addition, a complete understanding of faculty cultures requires a dynamic perspective that takes into account the processes through which faculty consensus develops, is maintained and institutionalized. Coping tactics may be developed by individual teachers, informal subgroups and/or professional associations, and the complex interrelationships among these various levels of adaptation are unknown. At any one point in time certain elements of a faculty culture may be emergent while others are formalized in standard operative procedures or in long-standing written agreements. Perhaps it is because of these various

complexities that faculty cultures have not been systematically studied. In any case, it is clearly a challenge to produce a coherent analysis from the scattered bits and pieces of evidence available.

The Research Process

This research is primarily based on computer searches of ERIC (1966-79), *Sociological Abstracts* (1963-79) and *Psychological Abstracts* (1967-79) data files. These searches of the journal and report literature were designed to uncover research regarding the antecedents and consequences of faculty cultures. Social background and professional training were treated as predictors of faculty cultures and faculty cultures were treated as predictors of instructional practices and learning outcomes. In these searches materials were identified both through the use of controlled indexing vocabularies and "free text" identifiers. However, the controlled index descriptors were based primarily on psychological concepts which were only crude approximations of our key concepts. Furthermore, the utilization of "faculty cultures" as a free text descriptor was of limited utility because the term is not widely used. Inevitably then, the search produced many irrelevant citations.

The searches produced the following yields: ERIC, 396 items; *Sociological Abstracts*, 136 items; *Psychological Abstracts*, 67 items. An abstract accompanied each citation. Through simple inspection of the abstracts it was possible to eliminate a great many obviously irrelevant citations. After perusal of full copies of the remaining articles it was possible to

eliminate others--many because they presented only aggregated survey data or because they did not use school faculties or subgroups as units of analysis. In the end only about one out of every six citations proved at all useful.

After the winnowing process was completed, the research continued in less formal ways. Immersion in the materials uncovered footnotes to be traced and new concepts and theoretical lines to be explored. In the end a general knowledge of the sociology of education, work and formal organizations proved invaluable.

Essential Problems and Coping Strategies

It appears that virtually all public schoolteachers faced certain common problems which arise from the professional and organizational contexts of their work. The essential problems to be dealt with here are: inadequate preparation, ambiguous goals, precarious autonomy, instructional isolation and batch-processing of students. Wherever possible we will show how recurrent problems, collegial interaction, faculty cultures and instructional practices may be plausibly linked. However, because there are so many gaps in the present knowledge of such matters, causal inferences are necessarily tenuous.

Inadequate Preparation

Beyond reinforcing a very general commitment to serving youth

(Lortie 1967: 155-71; Etzioni 1969), the pedagogical training of teachers contributes little to staff consensus and collegiality. In most cases beginning teachers are inadequately prepared for assumption of their classroom duties (e.g. Becker 1952; Silberman 1970: 373-522; Sarason 1971: 172; Lortie 1975: 67-70). The knowledge base upon which educational practice is built is weak and as a consequence teaching technology is primitive, uncodified and of uncertain effectiveness (Boocock 1966: 44; Hermanowicz 1966; Jackson 1968: 159-63; Radnor 1974: 12; Lortie 1975: 58-70; Bidwell and Kasarda 1975; Barr and Dreeben 1977; Centra and Potter 1980). Furthermore, education is a field within which diverse goals and models are contending for general acceptance. Nuthall and Snook identify behavior-modification, discovering learning and rational models as being among the dominant contenders at present.

> Unlike major models which have been influential in the physical sciences, these models do not compete with each other as alternative views of the same body of established data. Since there is little, if any, established data about teaching which is widely accepted, they compete with each other as alternative ways of viewing the practical activity of teaching (1963: 49).

Individually prescribed instruction (Glaser 1977) and mastery learning (Bloom 1976) are two more quite different approaches presently in vogue. Others have noted that teachers vary in their orientations toward control, content, discovery and sympathy (Sieber and Wilder 1967), humanistic versus

custodial ideologies (Hoy 1968, 1969), and incorporative versus developmental goals (Metz 1978). After being exposed to many conflicting approaches, it is not surprising that beginning teachers often feel overwhelmed and confused. No wonder they criticize their training as having been too theoretical, lacking in specifics about how to deal with everyday classroom realities (Hermanowicz 1966; Ladd 1966; Lortie 1975: 71).

As a result of their typically fragmented and ineffective specialized training, teachers within a given school are unlikely to share a common technical culture. Teachers, unlike professionals in other fields, seldom use jargon when talking about their work (Haller 1967). And as Lortie has observed

> The conceptions voiced by ... teachers ... are not those of colleagues who see themselves as sharing a viable, generalizable body of knowledge and practice. There is little idea of a "state of the art." Such a viewpoint presumes that there are identifiable principles and solutions which are possessed by all those within the colleague group. The image projected is more individualistic; teachers are portrayed as an aggregate of persons each assembling practices consistent with his experience and peculiar personality. It is not what "we, the colleagues" know and share which is paramount, but rather what *I* have learned through experience. From this perspective, socialization into teaching is largely *self-socialization*; one's personal predispositions are

> not only relevant but, in fact, stand at the core of becoming a teacher (1975: 79).

Leacock also radically discounts the importance of professional training as a guide for classroom practice (1969: 201).

However, it may be that training within academic disciplines, as opposed to general instruction in educational philosophy and methods, does lay some foundation for collegial interaction and solidarity among teachers who share a specialization. At the higher education level many studies have documented the existence of what might be called subcultural variations between disciplines in terms of basic orientations in undergraduate teaching (Lazarsfeld and Thielens 1958; Gamson 1966; Gusfield and Riesman 1966; Vreeland and Bidwell 1966; Lewis 1967; Moore 1970; Gaff and Wilson 1971; Lodal and Gordon 1975; Ladd and Lipset 1975; Liebert and Bayer 1975; Wilson 1975; Stark and Morstain 1975; Thielens 1978). In general, natural scientists as compared with social scientists are more conservative, distant from students, and more concerned with technical than moral goals. These differences are important bases of conflict between departments. Parallel cleavages among schoolteachers have occasionally been noted (e.g. McPherson 1972; Lacey 1977; Metz 1978). Thus, it may be that the members of subgroups, divisions or departments within a school may share certain perspectives, norms and values, while consensus may be lacking within the school as a whole. The overall effect of specialization and differentiation in training and consequent organizational placement may be to fragment school faculties, just as college and university faculties have been splintered by the same processes.

If formal, professional socialization does not produce staff consensus and solidarity, perhaps formal organizational procedures are more effective.

Official procedures for recruitment, selection, socialization, assignment, transfer and promotion of teachers may all affect the degree of consensus in a teaching staff. However, in the absence of studies of these formal organizational procedures and their impacts, one can only speculate about their importance in shaping faculty cultures and instructional practices.

Because teaching technology is uncertain and student teaching experiences are generally quite limited, beginning teachers (especially those in the most difficult inner-city schools) often experience a reality shock when they assume full classroom responsibilities (Becker 1952; Hermanowicz 1966; Foster 1974). In addition to drawing upon their own past experiences, novice teachers often seek help from their older, more experienced colleagues. Although idealistic newcomers may be initially repulsed by some of the traditional practices within their schools (Locke 1974: 10; Levy 1968), in the end they often seek guidance from elder colleagues. When the newcomer is appropriately deferent (Brookover and Erickson 1975: 200), he or she is likely to receive advice and guidance on a number of mundane, yet centrally important matters. These include the development of classroom routines, curriculum development, acquisition of teaching materials, preparation of plan books, record keeping and classroom management (Becker 1951: Hermanowicz 1965: 20; Eddy 1969: 107; Willower, Eidell and Hoy 1967; Hoy 1969; Leacock 1969: 201). Becker (1952) and Eddy (1969) both found that teachers who did not transfer out of inner-city schools tended to adopt more physical disciplinary techniques, lowered academic standards and a definition of the situation as one in which little academic progress could be expected because the students came from impoverished family backgrounds.

It has been noted that informal work groups among teachers often develop along generational lines (Eddy 1969: 111; Brookover and Erickson 1975: 200; Collins and Noblit 1978: 154; Metz 1978). One can only speculate about the content of conversations among beginning teachers in the staff room. But it seems likely that collective blame-placing, commiseration and consensual validation of situational adjustments are common in peer interactions (Lacey 1977: 86; House and Lapan 1978: 13).

There is probably considerable variation among individuals and staffs in terms of the extent to which help is openly sought and information freely shared. In a study of student teachers in England, Lacey found that novices adapted to the problems and failures they faced in two major ways.

> The first category involves a "collectivization" of the problem. The problem is shared by the group whose collective opinions legitimize the displacement of blame. The second category involves the "privatization" of the problem. The student doesn't speak about it, except in a most guarded way, and may refuse to admit to any problem at all in certain circumstances. Once again, some students remain true to one or other of these basic strategies throughout the course, many shift from one to another, depending on the situational constraints (1977: 86).

This kind of variation can be expected to continue after completion of the period of supervised teacher training.

In summary then, it does appear that beginning teachers share the common problem of inadequate preparation. And there is scattered evidence

that the problem is handled informally through intergenerational consultation and peer support. It is not possible to guage the efficacy of the informal socialization process from these few observations. But it is easy to see that such patterns maintain the status quo within a school and are obstacles to change.

Goal Ambiguity

It is useful to distinguish between the official or consensual goals of a school or school system and its operative goals (Perrow 1961; Mohr 1975). The former are typically, perhaps purposely, stated in extremely vague and general terms. For example, a school board might adopt a goal statement which calls for maximizing the cognitive and moral growth of each and every child within the system. Although anyone would be hard put to specify precisly the actions and programs which would achieve such an abstract goal, it meets the formal requirements for some statement of guiding purpose. It is relatively easy to achieve consensus on a goal such as this because it does not meaningfully constrain the actions of administrators or teachers. Expressed commitment to an ambiguous goal often serves to mask deep divisions regarding educational philosophy and technology. In fact, abstract goals may legitimate a very wide range of instructional practices. Certainly that seems to be the case at the university level where otherwise badly divided faculties and administrators reach consensus on the value of academic freedom (Gross 1968). In effect, they agree that it is appropriate for professors to enjoy broad discretion in instructional matters and that diversity is desirable. The operative goals are embodied in the actual operating policies and procedures

(Perrow 1961). These standard operations may be understood as representing the outcomes of bargaining among power blocs within the organization (Cyert and March 1963; Lauter 1968: 236-38; Radnor 1974: 7-9). Obviously there may be considerable disjuncture between official and operative goals. For example, in prestigious universities the official goals may express equal commitments to teaching, research and community service while the operative goals may be to maximize research productivity even if it has detrimental effects upon undergraduate teaching. Or a public school may be formally committed to maximizing student growth but actually settle for maintaining an orderly custodial operation.

Because Americans have such a deep and abiding faith in education as the answer to all social problems, over time the schools, colleges, and universities have been given more and more tasks to perform.

> Americans have unrealistic expectations of public schools. The accomplishments they expect are dazzling in ambition and variety. Public schools should give every child a sound grasp of the three Rs, foster creativity, impart a thorough knowledge of our world history, literature and art, train minds in the scientific method of inquiry, offer vocational training, develop problem-solving ability, foster imagination, develop independence, impart skills of social interaction with adults and peers, and support good moral character. (Metz 1978: 1).

In slightly more abstract terms our educational institutions have been

charged with the responsibilities to contribute to cultural production, diffusion and reproduction; the maintenance of pluralism and also the promotion of social mobility and assimilation; the development of positive self-concepts and motivation among all students so that they might achieve basic employment skills and the processes of selecting, sorting and allocating students to widely divergent occupational roles on the basis of differential achievement; the performance of both custodial and training functions (Parelius and Parelius, 1978: 22-32). The teachers' difficulty in discerning official organizational direction is compounded by the fact that education is a field characterized by faddism and rapidly changing priorities (Nelson and Sieber, 1976; Dornbush 1976: 9). Finally, the goals of schools are typically highly idealistic, even utopian (Becker 1964; Sarason 1971: 25). As Warren noted:

> There is a disposition by officials to express every aspect of the educational process in its ideal form; that is to speak of what ought to happen rather than what is likely to happen. This obsessive preoccupation with goals makes it more difficult to communicate about the reality of processes instrumental to the goals (1975: 140).

The implications of these shifting, idealistic and conflicting goals for action within the school and the classroom are rarely thought out and openly debated. It is left to teachers as individuals and groups to resolve dilemmas, develop priorities, make difficult and unpopular operating decisions and generally to interpret and implement official goals. The teachers' decisions are expressed in the standard operating procedures of

schools. Presumably, these SOPs are crucial determinants of classroom practice, but they have not been systematically studied. It would be fascinating to know much more about the degree to which there are standardized grouping, testing, grading and homework policies and procedures within and between schools and about the processes through which they are developed and maintained.

Crecine (1975: 25) and Radnor (1974: 12) have noted the dearth of empirical research on organizations which have ambiguous goals and the consequences of such goals. It is not clear just how serious a problem teachers consider goal ambiguity to be. Although the sociological literature on work and organizations suggests that it may be quite serious, judging from the paucity of references to it in the education literature, one must conclude that it is certainly not salient. In fact, many teachers may feel that on balance it is better to work within organizations with vague and ambiguous goals than within ones whose goals are specific and, therefore, potentially constraining. Ambiguous and even contradictory goals maximize teachers' discretion and are probably appreciated for that. On the other hand, such goals may create anxiety among other teachers because they do not provide clear guidance for action or standards for evaluation (Lortie 1975: 144; Bess 1977: 250), and because they effectively pass the burden of making controversial decisions down to lowest level of the organizational hierarchy. As teachers interpret and implement official goals, they are open to criticism from citizens, superiors and special interests who can argue that their interpretation of official goals is not being implemented. Thus, ambiguous goals may preserve the status quo and

decrease freedom by increasing the potential for public controversy and making personnel overly cautious about proposing changes (Lortie 1967). Still vague goals do allow for the introduction of innovations at the classroom and school levels rather than from the top and may in that way facilitate change. Where school-community relations are positive and/or where community awareness of teaching practices is minimal, vague goals may be appreciated much more than at other times. When conflict and controversy do develop teachers may look to administrators, local boards or state education agencies for more concrete policy guidance.

Because the literature on the implementation of goals in educational systems is so sparse, this discussion has raised many more questions than it has answered. But it may be observed that the absence of clear goals increases the probability that teachers' instructional practices will be heavily influenced by informal work groups and the cultural guidelines for teaching that they develop.

Precarious Autonomy

There has been some scholarly dispute over the question of how much discretion teachers enjoy in determining the nature, level and direction of instructional effort. On the one hand it is clear that political, legal, economic, sociocultural, bureaucratic and professional factors impose some limitations on teacher autonomy (Lieberman 1956; Hughes 1959: 451; Leacock 1969: 202; Hasenfeld and English 1974: 98). Eddy (1969) believes that the restrictions are so severe that teachers more closely resemble technicians than professionals. Others (e.g. Bidwell 1965; Dreeben 1973; Weick 1976) believe that teachers, like other human service professionals,

enjoy a rather high degree of autonomy. Etzioni (1969) takes the middle ground by characterizing teachers as semi-professionals with moderate amounts of discretion.

Perhaps all would agree that whatever autonomy and discretion teachers do enjoy is precarious. Schoolteachers are like other workers in that they must continually ". . . struggle to maintain some control over one's decision of what work to do, and over the disposition of one's time and of one's routine of life (Hughes 1971: 346)." As Becker has suggested, "The picture one should get is that of the teacher striving to maintain what she regards as her legitimate spheres of authority in the face of possible challenge by others." (1952: 379) The teacher's classroom authority is often challenged by administrators, parents and students. However, there are informal and formal norms which offer some protection.

School principals probably pose the chief threats to teacher autonomy. They are formally responsible for all the educational activities in their buildings. As the chief administrative officers, principals are expected by the board and superintendent to be educational leaders, supervisors, advisors, and evaluators.

However, bureaucratic rules and job definitions do not clearly demarcate the boundaries of administrative and staff domains of authority. In general, rule domination within the schools is low because the teachers have to make many on-the-spot decisions in the process of providing service to diverse clients using an uncertain technology (Dreeben 1973: 453). Like other workers in similar circumstances, teachers are expected to exercise their own judgment in most circumstances (Gouldner 1954: 105-180;

Gordon 1957; Stinchcombe 1959; Goss 1961, 1963; Smigel 1964; Scott 1965; Perrow 1970: 75-89; Silberman 1970; Freidson 1975; Metz 1978). Still there is considerable ambiguity and overlap in the principals' and teachers' job descriptions. Consequently, teachers as individuals and as members of professional associations often come into conflict with administrators over red tape, specific policies, participation in policy formation and breadth of discretion (Corwin 1970: 105-71). These are the classic points of conflict between professionals and bureaucratic officials (Clark 1963; Baldridge 1978: 92-93).

In order to exercise leadership and promote innovation or change within a school, a principal must attempt to expand the "zone of acceptablility" of his or her commands (Hoy and Rees 1974: 269). In order to supplement the authority of office with informal authority, it is necessary for the principal to foster a spirit of loyalty among the teaching staff and/or to utilize power resources in informal negotiations with teachers. On the one hand the principal may play the senior colleague role (Bidwell 1965: 1014) and use friendly persuasion and appeals to common goals. On the other hand the principal may distribute scarce goods such as choice teaching assignments or instructional materials in such a way as to reward loyal staff. However, it is dangerous for a principal to attempt to expand the administrative domain too much. If the staff feel their turf is being invaded, serious morale problems may develop and the principal may meet resistance--individual or collective, active or passive, open or covert (Becker 1951; Rist 1971; Collins and Noblit 1978).

In order to minimize administrative encroachment in the core matters of curriculum and instructional practice, teachers adopt definitions of the situation which legitimate broad staff discretion and which narrow the sphere of acceptable administrative action. Most basically they claim to be experts who are therefore entitled to professional recognition. Schoolteachers, especially those with tenure and extensive experience, expect the principal to accept that claim and to treat them with respect and dignity (Lortie 1967). Most teachers consider it unacceptable for principals to supervise them closely and set forth detailed rules to guide instructional practice (Hoy and Rees 1974; Lortie 1975; House and Lapan 1978). Only beginning teachers want the principal to take a more active role in providing leadership and supervision (Hermanowicz 1966; Edgar and Warren 1969). Like medical doctors, teachers are likely to resent unsolicited advice as an adverse reflection on their professional competencies (Goss 1961: 47; Blumberg 1974; Freidson 1975; House and Lapan 1978).

Although principals are formally required to observe and evaluate all teachers within their schools, in practice they often neglect to perform this official duty (NEA 1969). It may be that principals are simply too busy with housekeeping matters to spend time on observation and evaluation. But there are deeper reasons rooted in the faculty culture. First, teachers value autonomy highly and correctly perceive that evaluation is a key instrument of administrative control (Dornbush and Scott 1975). Thus, teachers resent intrusion into their classrooms for this purpose. From the teacher's perspective, the evaluation process is especially anxiety-producing because the evaluative criteria are so

ambiguous. Such criteria may be stated in terms of vague jargon or platitudes or they may not be formally stated at all. Dornbush (1976) found that fifty-one percent of a large and diverse sample of teachers had no idea about any of the criteria by which they were being evaluated. Given what has already been noted about ambiguity and controversy regarding educational goals and techniques, it is not surprising that there is a lack of consensus regarding evaluative criteria (Ryans 1960). Clear and precise criteria would be unacceptable because they would rule out many approaches which are currently practiced. The same lack of clarity regarding the evaluation of teaching is evident in higher education (Meeth 1976). Teachers at all levels are likely to share the perception that evaluation is essentially an arbitrary and capricious procedure which is much more likely to deal with minutae than with central educational issues (Wolf 1972; Eddy 1975). Of course, evaluation is especially threatening to untenured teachers because principals observe and evaluate them not only to improve instruction, but also to provide a basis for tenure decisions. Additional complications in the evaluation process arise from the fact that both principals and teachers perceive excellence in teaching as being primarily dependent upon unchangeable personality characteristics and that most teachers are rather securely protected by tenure regulations. Thus, the evaluation process may be seen as an exercise in futility (Sarason 1971: 120). It appears that in education as in medicine (Freidson 1975) the informal occupational culture created and maintained by individuals claiming professional status tends to neutralize formal administrative authority. The evaluation process in

most educational institutions may be nothing more than an anxiety producing yet ineffectual ritual suffered by principals and teachers in order to help legitimate a very loosely-coupled organizational structure.

Not only do teachers expect the principal to keep out of their private territories, the classrooms, but they also expect him or her to minimize intrusion from parents. Parents, especially those of high status, pose serious threats to the teacher's authority (Waller 1932: 68-81; Becker 1952; Lortie 1975: 88-91). The teachers feel that the ideal parent plays the role of "distant assistant" (Lortie 1975: 191), certainly not that of persistent critic. The principal is expected to play a boundary maintenance role by keeping the parent out of the classroom and by backing the teacher up whenever a parent complains. Freidson quotes a physician as having said, "Right or wrong, the administration should back the doctor (1975: 110)." Many teachers probably feel the same way. In addition, principals are expected to side with the teacher whenever classroom authority is challenged by students.

In summary then, it appears that the precariousness of the schoolteacher's autonomy stimulates the adoption of a number of defensive perceptions, values and informal norms. These informal protections are supplemented to some extent by bureaucratic regulations (Katz 1964) and by labor contracts negotiated through formal collective bargaining (Jessup 1978: 45). Nonetheless, Lortie (1975: 186) is correct in pointing out that the informal norms are fragile and limited in times of trouble. The bureaucratic regulations and contract provisions may prove somewhat more durable. However, when large-scale social protests develop such as those associated with the

Civil Rights, feminist, community control and accountability movements, state and federal courts and education agencies may impose restrictions that impact upon instructional practices (Parelius and Parelius, 1978). In other words, teacher autonomy is indeed precarious.

Instructional Isolation

It is standard practice in American public schools for instructional responsibility to be assigned to individuals, rather than teams. Teachers are assigned to their own separate classes and classrooms and are expected to cope with most problems independently. There are clearly benefits to this segmented form of organization. Ambiguous goals and nonroutine technologies are best accommodated by structures which require minimal coordination and allow for the utilization of intuition and idiosyncratic personality traits (Metz 1978: 22). Given the controversies over educational goals and techniques which have been discussed previously, conflict and competition are likely to develop among teachers. Spatial and temporal isolation helps minimize staff frictions. The four walls of the classroom restrict visibility of teaching performance. They provide privacy and enhance autonomy.

However, encapsulation within the classroom also limits collegial interaction and the potential for professional support, stimulation, constructive criticism and guidance. Teaching in isolation is especially difficult for beginning teachers. But teaching is a "lonely profession" for all schoolteachers (Lortie 1965; Sarason 1971; Warren 1975; House and Lapan 1978: 16-19).

Teaching staffs are often divided into cliques (Sarason 1971: 151-2;

McPherson 1971: 52-9; Watts 1974: 27-8; Brookover and Erickson 1975: 197; Eddy 1975: 111). Among the dimensions of cleavage within a school faculty which have been noted are: age, experience, gender, race or ethnicity, subject matter specialization, leisure time interest, political liberalism/conservatism, and, of course, educational philosophy and technique. Sometimes the cleavages are superimposed. For example, it may happen that female, primary grade teachers share leisure and political interests as well as particular educational philosphies. Other cleavages may be cross-cutting. Hermanowicz (1966) reported that beginning teachers were sometimes dismayed by the amount of conflict, gossip and backbiting within the staffroom. Still, we know very little about the dynamics of informal teacher cliques and the ways in which these groups contribute to the building of a single faculty culture or of separate subcultures.

Factionalization is likely to result in a situation where staff members only communicate on a routine basis with like-minded and sympathetic individuals. Fragmented communication patterns are conducive to the development and maintenance of pluralistic ignorance. Thus, it is not surprising that Dornbush (1976) found that teachers typically did not know what materials or grouping patterns were being used by their colleagues. Communication between members of different cliques is likely to be confined to topics upon which mutual agreement is expected. The etiquette of teacher relationships may be very like that of physicians and professors in that one generally attempts to avoid conflict, controversy and confrontation (Bess 1975; Freidson 1975; Meeth 1976). These informal norms may also preclude the admission of ignorance and the proffering of unsolicited

advice. Thus, teachers who adhere to the collegial code are unlikely to explore their differences, doubts and confusions. Thus, common problems may go unrecognized and consensus regarding the range of acceptable solutuions to common problems may fail to develop. In some instances the members of different staff factions may agree to "live and let live" and simply avoid one another. In other situations, gossip and conflict may continue unabated for long periods of time.

The isolation of the classroom and limited opportunities for interaction in the staffroom make it difficult, if not impossible, for effective collegial control to develop (Dreeben 1973: 469; Hind, Dornbush and Scott 1974). Evaluative information is fragmentary and not based on personal observation. And teachers, like doctors (Freidson 1975), college professors and other professionals may prefer to "Hear no evil, speak no evil and see no evil" because serious attempts to exert social control would necessitate the institution of stringent and confining rules and monitoring procedures. Although teachers apparently do value warm, supportive and egalitarian relationships with their colleagues (McPherson 1972: 73; Lortie 1975: 194), solidarity within an entire faculty is rare. It has been suggested that college professors who are extraordinarily popular with students are shunned by colleagues as ratebusters or charlatans (Mann 1968; Meeth 1976). And teachers who compete unfairly for student favor by lowering academic standards may be rejected by their peers (Waller 1961: 428; Lortie 1975: 120; Collins and Noblit 1978).

But if a professor or schoolteacher is tenured and unconcerned with colleagues' opinions, informal sanctions are unlikely to be effective. While

privacy in practice makes it difficult to develop and enforce common standards of performance, visibility of teaching performance may strengthen the impact of collegial sanctions. For example, Dornbush (1976: 8) found that in open space schools, where teachers have much greater than normal opportunity to observe one another's teaching styles and methods, relatively high levels of trust and openness to collegial evaluation develop.

There are probably important variations in the normative contexts within which teacher work (Foskett 1967; Sarason 1971). In some schools collegial relationships may be close and the faculty culture may provide useful guidelines for instructional practice. Norms may be clear and widely recognized and the range of acceptable practices well-defined. The teachers may form a cohesive in-group which may or may not stand solidly in opposition to students, parents, administrators and/or the school board. In other schools, where collegial conversation is guarded and shoptalk limited, it is unlikely that a cohesive faculty culture will develop (Freidson 1975; Lortie 1975; Conley and Verner 1978: 14). Under such circumstances there will be incomplete recognition of shared problems and incomplete validation of common adaptations. Teachers will seldom reach beyond the intimacy of their small circle of friends in order to build broader faculty solidarity.

Batch-Processing

Teachers are expected to provide effective instructional services to batches of students which are often large, diverse and resistant to involvement in the educational process. This is obviously a very tall order, especially in light of the ambiguous goals and the uncertain and labor-intensive technology in general use. Still most teachers approach

the task with a high degree of commitment. They want to promote maximal growth on the part of all the children entrusted to their care. And they want to be even handed, calm and gentle as they provide classroom leadership (Sarason 1971: 152; Lortie 1967: 168).

However, in practice certain of these ideals may prove contradictory. For example, promotion of student growth may require the development of personalistic relations which are contrary to the principle of universalism. And in trying to instruct large groups of reluctant students, remaining calm, patient and gentle, may not always work. Unfortunately, little is known about the social processes through which individual and collective deviation from professional standards develops and is legitimated. Most of the literature reviewed below implicitly views deviance as an individual process and therefore does not deal with the influences of collegial interaction and faculty cultures upon these aspects of instructional practice. Still it is important to discuss the problems inherent in batch-processing and the fragmentary evidence regarding adaptations to those problems.

Teachers want to reach all their students and are frustrated and feel guilty because they cannot (Sarason 1971: 152). They complain that there are simply too many children and not enough uninterrupted instructional time (Jackson 1968; Lortie 1975: 168-71). Given large batches of students and available technology, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for a single teacher to challenge and monitor the progress of each and every highly individual child. Furthermore, large batch-processing of students robs the teacher of the psychic rewards which are

so important in teaching. Teachers need to feel that they are having a clear and dramatic influence on one or more children within a class (Locke 1974; Lortie 1975: 134; Stebbins 1977: 40-41), but the larger the class the rarer those rewards are. Without regular positive feedback about one's teaching efforts, it is hard to see how strong commitment can be maintained over time (Bess 1977: 250).

The problem of class size is often exacerbated by heterogeneity (Sarason 1971). It has often been asserted that teachers differentiate among students in terms of the extent to which they measure up to the "ideal student." According to many accounts, the ideal student stands out on both moral and academic dimensions of the student role and is more often than not a white child from a middle-class home (Becker 1952: 471-2; Johnson 1963; Klausmier and Goodwin 1966; Kohl 1967; Kozol 1967; Lortie 1967: 160; Eddy 1969: 77; Rist 1970: 8; Sarason 1971: 156; Ogbu 1974; Warren 1975: 144; Khlief 1976: 71; Stebbins 1976: 40; Metz 1978: 181). These categorizations and preferences may be explained in terms of personal bias or situational adjustments to organizational realities. Because class and ethnic elements apparently enter into the teachers' social typologies of students, it is easy to see them as personal reflections of larger cultural prejudices. However, it is also possible to understand them as collective adaptations of work frustrations. By adopting a custodial attitude toward a large category of students, teachers effectively lighten their work loads. They simply write off many students who they define as being incapable of profiting from their educational services.

In classrooms where the proportion of dissatisfying

> academic performances reaches a certain consistent level and disorderly behaviour is an exceptional problem, teachers are apt to develop a *custodial orientation*. They come to believe that significant improvement in academic performance is impossible for a large majority of their pupils; that they are, therefore, really carrying out a mere caretaker function for the community. In one way or another several writers have discerned this outlook in teachers working with low-ability classes, which are typically associated with slum environments. In general, it tends to make elementary teachers out of those instructing such groups at junior and senior high school levels, in the sense that there is extraordinary emphasis placed on control at the expense of teaching. The orientation is epitomized by a sign taped to the blackboard in one such classroom: "Be Loving, Be Kind, Be Quiet." (Stebbins 1977: 43).

If students are defined as unteachable, failure to learn becomes the fault of the student and his family. Thus, the teacher is protected against feelings of self-doubt and personal responsibility.

Another pattern of adaptation to heterogeneous classes has been identified by Dahllöf (1971). He found that in traditional classes, where the students are taught in a single batch rather than in multiple subgroups, teachers decide when to move from one topic to another when the "criterion

group," those next to the bottom of the class in aptitude, have mastered the material. Moving faster would challenge the more able students but insure the failure of many others. Moving at the rate of the slowest children would bore all the others.

However, it may be that such undifferentiated teaching methods are used less and less often. Cohen, Meyer, Scott and Deal note that

> . . . the nature of elementary school instruction today is considerably removed from the traditional batch-processing of thirty children through a single textbook or a uniform set of activities. For instance, in the survey of schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. . . teachers described quite complex patterns of instruction. There is a great deal of differentiation, involving the use of multiple materials and complex student groupings (1979: 20).

This differentiation of classroom instruction is made possible by the availability of diverse materials, supplemental teachers and the utilization of team-teaching arrangements. Such teaching methods move toward the ideal of individualization, but complicate the issues of justice and fairness in the classroom. The teacher who judges students in terms of a single standard is open to criticism as being overly rigid and creating problems for the fastest and slowest learners. Teachers who use multiple standards are open to charges of bias in the creation and maintenance of groupings.

Barr (1975) studied grouping and pacing practices employed by teachers

within three schools as they taught reading. Operating without official guidelines, teachers developed a variety of procedures. Some subdivided their students into ability groups while others did not. Those who did not group for reading instruction moved their classes at a single rate. Those who did employ instructional grouping paced their groups differently. And teachers of groups with similar ability differed extensively in the paces they set. Still, she did find that teachers' practices remained stable over time and that colleagues who interacted frequently shared similar approaches.

Waller described the classroom as a ". . . despotism in a perilous state of equilibrium." (1961: 10) Although his statement may be somewhat overdrawn, there can be little doubt that faculty cultures and interests are in substantial conflict with student cultures and interests (Hollingshead 1949; Coleman 1961, 1966; Bidwell 1965: 973; McDill, Rigsby and Meyers 1969; Foster 1974: 179-235; Henderson 1975: 395; Collins and Noblit 1978: 121). Student resistance to teachers instructional efforts can be individual or collective, active or passive, overt or covert. In any case, that resistance must be overcome if the teacher is going to be able to maintain order in the classroom and proceed with instruction. Therefore, the problems of how to manage the classroom and maintain discipline are fundamental ones. Waller (1961) and more recently Woods (1977) have provided us with lists of classroom survival strategies employed by teachers. Apparently the range of control stratgies which are considered acceptable within the colleague group is very wide--so wide as to include strategies which directly contradict official guidelines.

For example, teachers sometimes negotiate with potentially disruptive students and trade passing grades for behavioral compliance (Gordon 1957; Collins and Noblit 1978: 121). In inner-city schools, oldtimers on the staff teach newcomers that it is appropriate to use physical means of punishment to keep students in line even though official regulations expressly forbid the practice (Becker 1951; Willower and Jones 1963; Hoy 1967; Kohl 1967; Levy 1968; Eddy 1969; Sarason 1971; Silberman 1971; Rist 1972; Foster 1974: 179-235). Teachers are probably ashamed when they deviate from organizational and professional standards in attempting to maintain classroom order (Lortie 1967). But once again the teacher is able to turn to close associates who will provide social support and reassurance regarding the "unfortunate necessity" of such situational adjustments (McPherson 1972: 73; Rist 1972: 350-51).

Conclusions and Implications

When this research project began it was not at all clear that a body of literature dealing with faculty cultures actually existed. But by gathering widely scattered ideas and bits of information and arranging them, the following tentative conclusions or hypotheses for further research emerge.

Despite professional and organizational barriers to the development of faculty solidarity, informal work groups do develop among teachers. These primary groups offer their members help, support, guidance and consensual validation regarding appropriate instructional practices. Formal

professional observation, consultation and shoptalk are infrequent among teachers. Nonetheless, selective recruitment and admission to cliques and cues passed during informal conversations produce a degree of sharing of perspectives, values and norms. Specialization, factional divisions, instructional isolation and restricted opportunities for communication limit the recognition of common problems and solutions as well as the development of overall consensus. Thus, in many cases it may be more useful to focus on faculty cliques and subcultures within a school than to view the staff as a cohesive group with a coherent culture. However, in situations where the faculty perceives itself as being threatened by the school board, administration, parents or students, internal divisions may be forgotten and solidarity increased. In such situations the staff may form a "delinquent community" similar to those found among French schoolchildren (Pitts 1963: 259), French bureaucrats (Crozier 1964: 210) and American physicians (Freidson 1975: 242-44). Teachers apparently are like these other workers in that they develop a conspiratorial consensus against outsiders which dispaces blame, legitimates deviance, promotes secrecy and, most fundamentally perhaps, protects the autonomy and independence of each group member.

As a result of this literature review a sociological model of the teaching-learning process has been developed (see Figure 1 below). It highlights the interrelationships between student culture and peer relationships (which have been extensively studied) and faculty cultures and networks (which have not been systematically studied). The model posits a direct relationship between educational and professional training and

instructional practices on the basis of internalized norms and values. But it also allows for the impact of informal collegial groups in reinforcing professional orientations or in encouraging and legitimizing situational adjustments. Further, it calls attention to the dynamic interplay between faculty cultures and actions, on the one hand, and student cultures and actions, on the other. Thus, patterns of mutual adjustment and classroom negotiation are accommodated within the model. Finally, in the model student achievement is determined by the social contexts which shape the nature, level and direction of both student and faculty efforts.

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Insert Figure 1 here

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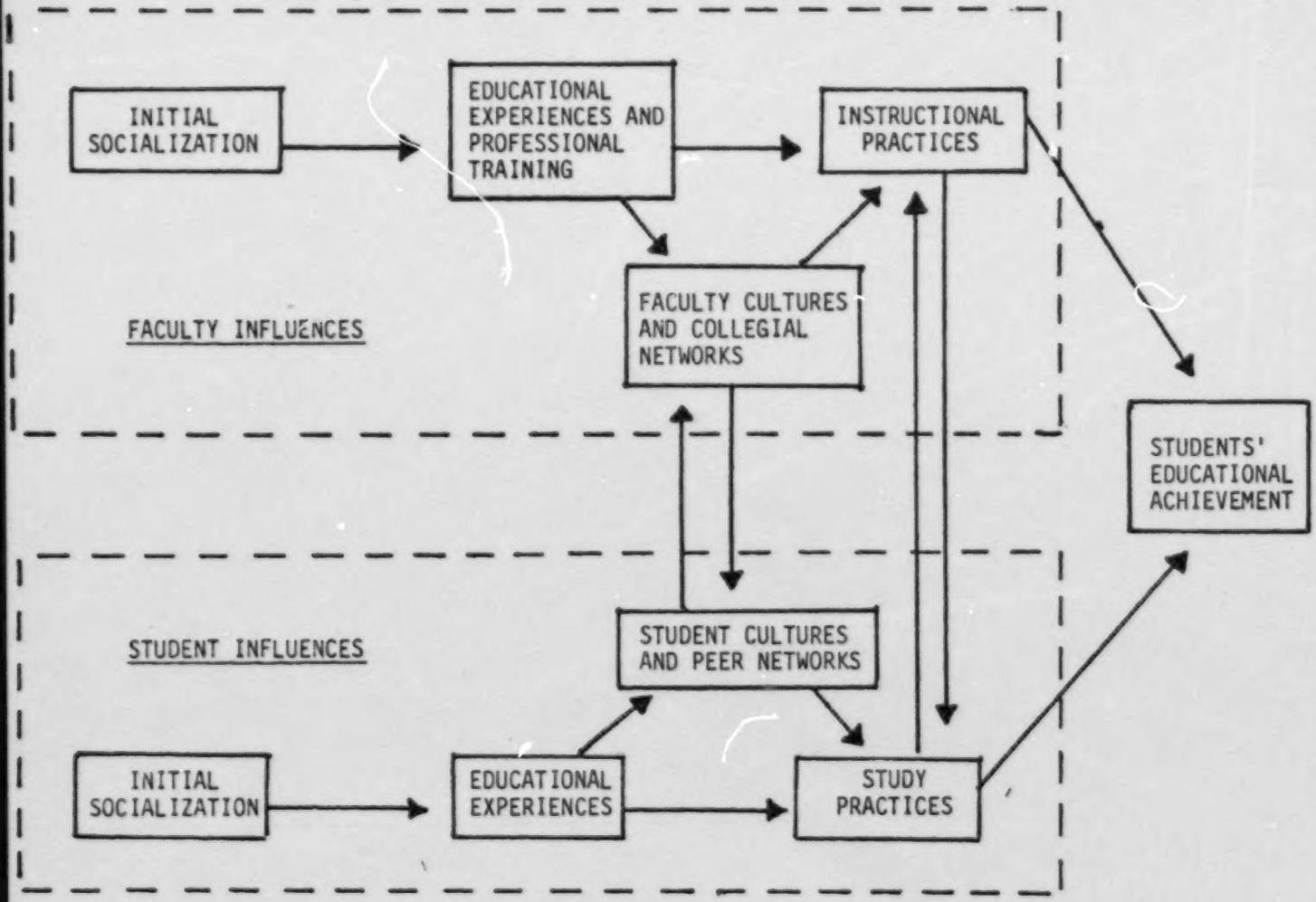
Faculty Cultures and Learning Outcomes

To date, attempts to link teacher variables to student learning outcomes have generally been unsuccessful (Boocock 1966: 18; Centra and Potter 1980: 288). It may be that by reconceptualizing the problem and focusing on the normative order of the school rather than the individual classroom, it will be possible to make significant advances. The tasks at hand are to understand more fully the social contexts of instruction and to identify the social structural circumstances which maximize student achievement. Fortunately some very promising qualitative and quantitative research on these topics has recently been published.

Ethnographic studies of schools undergoing change can prove very

FIGURE 1

A Sociological Model of the Teaching-Learning Process



useful by providing detailed descriptive data. We noted earlier that in stable schools, faculty norms, values and perceptions are generally taken for granted and, therefore, difficult to study. At present, many schools are undergoing rapid change due to community demographic shifts, desegregation and consolidation. Such schools are ideal research sites precisely because traditional faculty cultures and standard operating procedures are likely to be called into question. The National Institute of Education contracted for a series of ethnographic studies of desegregating schools in 1975. The final reports of those studies contain many useful insights about faculty work norms and values (Collins and Noblit 1978; Scherer and Slawksi 1978; Clement, Eisenhart, Harding and Livesay 1979; Ianni, Sullivan, Orr, Henry and Mavros 1979; Schofield 1979). They document the painful individual and collective adjustments which teachers made in trying to cope with desegregation. Common adaptations included: lowering of academic expectations, adoption of custodial attitudes toward slow learners, and concentration on minimum basic skills; reduction of academic demands both within the classroom and in terms of homework; and a preoccupation with maintaining control. Sharp conflicts developed between staff oldtimers and newcomers which were exacerabated by fear, uncertainty and awkwardness in race relations. Focused ethnographic studies which help define more precisely the problems which staff perceive as resulting from desegregation and the processes through which these are resolved could have major practical and theoretical payoffs.

In his synthesis of eight case studies recently completed in exceptionally successful inner-city schools, Leonard L. Gregory isolated leadership, staff selection procedures and staff solidarity as being

centrally important factors. The positive leadership role of the school building principal was obvious to all observers. The fact that the principal was able to hand-pick his or her staff also apparently contributed to the success. Gregory noted that through such a selection process it was possible to build a ". . . strong instructional program because the staff shared common goals for the overall school organization (1980: 133)." Teachers generally worked well together and shared ideas as well as materials. In these distinctive schools cohesive collegial relationships and shared cultural guidelines apparently combined to create very positive social contexts for learning.

Beady and Flood (1980) utilized a comparative case study approach in an attempt to discover social-psychological school climate variables associated with achievement. The four schools selected for study were matched on many important dimensions including the fact that they all served a clientele with low socio-economic status. However, the schools did vary in terms of mean student achievement levels and racial composition. Thus, there were two majority black schools and two majority white schools. Within each pair one school displayed distinctively high achievement and the other low achievement. The investigators found that in the high achieving schools, both black and white, teachers often discussed professional matters and teaching problems in the staffroom and continually reinforced one another's belief that high levels of student achievement should be expected. Within the classroom they put these beliefs into practice and demanded adequate student performance before reinforcement was given.

Within low achieving schools teachers seldom discussed pedagogical concerns in the lounge except to commiserate with one another and to reinforce their shared belief that many students could legitimately be "written off" in terms of achievement because their homes were too poor and their abilities too limited.

In addition to the growing body of qualitative, case-study-based evidence relating aspects of collegial relationships and faculty cultures to achievement, two notable quantitative studies have been published very recently which also suggest a causal linkage. Both studies indicate that school "climate" or "ethos" has an influence upon student learning.

Michael Rutter and his associates in their book, *15,000 Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects Upon Children* (1979), made an important contribution. They utilized a comparative organizational and longitudinal research design in their study of the impacts of twelve inner-London secondary schools. The research team found that the schools differed dramatically in terms of student achievement and behavior and that differences in the intake characteristics of the student bodies did not wholly account for those differences. They were able to demonstrate quite clearly that a school's "ethos" importantly affects achievement. For example, they found schools where high expectations for student achievement and behavior were maintained, those expectations were met. In addition, they presented evidence that teachers who were prepared, punctual and warmly supportive of student efforts produced superior results. Perhaps even more important to present concerns, Rutter's team concluded that in schools where staff cohesion, supportiveness, cooperation and willingness

to exercise informal social control regarding professional standards were strong, student attendance and academic success were high and delinquency was low (1979:182-203).

Brookover and his associates (1980) were also able to measure quantitatively the impact of schools. They employed a cross-sectional research design in their study of 159 public elementary schools in the state of Michigan. Data were derived from official records of school achievement and from questionnaires completed by 19,544 students, 789 teachers and 159 school principals. Multiple regression techniques were used to assess the separate effects of school social inputs, structure and climate upon student outcomes. The model which they tested (see Figure 2 below) includes some of the same elements as the model presented earlier in this paper.

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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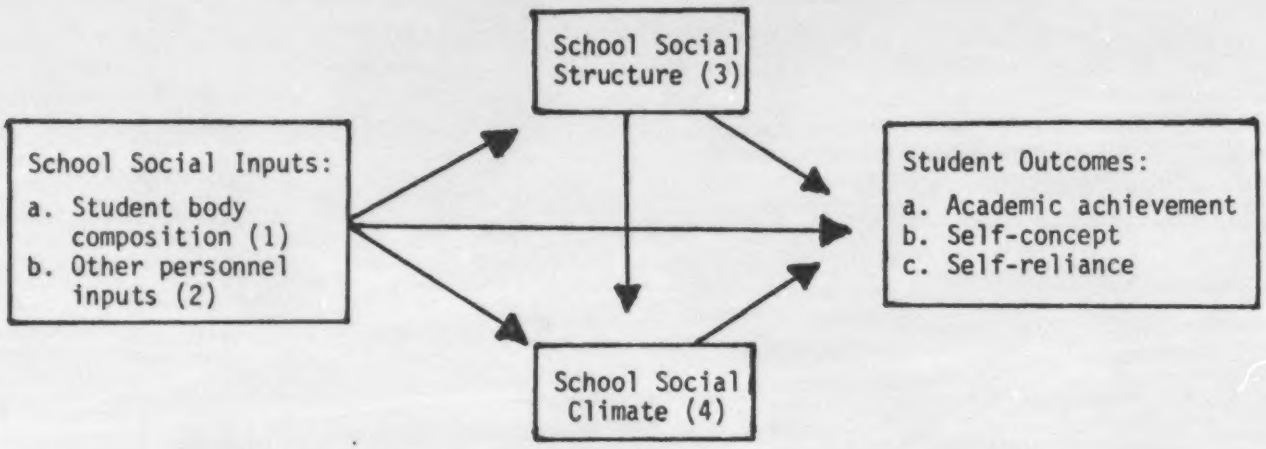
Although the specific findings of Brookover's study are far too rich and complex to report in detail here, one general conclusion was that school climate variables explained between school differences in mathematics and reading achievement as well as schools' student body composition. The authors feel that they have strong empirical support for their contention that

> . . . evaluations made of students' ability, the students' role definitions and expectations and the normative climate characterizing the patterns of interaction in the school provide the foundation for

FIGURE 2

General Model of School Social System Variables
with Hypothesized Relation to Student Outcomes (1980:7)



(1) measured by mean school SES and percentage white.

(2) measured by standard scores of school size, average daily attendance, professionals per 1,000 students, average years teaching experience, average tenure in school, percentage of teachers with advanced degrees, and mean teacher salary.

(3) measured by teacher satisfaction with school structure, parent involvement, differentiation in student programs, principal's report of time devoted to instruction, open-closed classroom.

(4) measured by 14 variables derived from student, teacher and principal reports of the norms, expectations, and feelings about the school.

> a social-psychological conception of school learning which we believe explains much of the differences in outcomes (1980: 147).

Obviously this paper has raised many more questions than it has answered. That could not be avoided given the primitive state of the existing literature. Clearly there is need for further conceptual and empirical work in order to expand our understanding of the formal and informal organization of teaching and learning. Still the evidence that has been reviewed strongly suggests that one very promising approach would be to work toward elucidating collegial relationships and faculty cultures. We need to know more about the nature and content of collegial interaction, the formal and informal processes through which faculty cultures are developed and maintained, and the impacts of official and unofficial mechanisms of social control. Ultimately our goal should be to isolate the social structural circumstances under which teachers within a school develop close, cooperative, professional relationships in the interest of serving children. Research directed toward answering these questions will contribute not only to the discipline of sociology but to the practice of education.

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